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Probers subpoena bank files

Contra leader's accounts sought for Senate panel

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WASHINGTON—Investigators from the special Senate committee scrutinizing the Iran-contra affair have subpoenaed the records of nearly a dozen banks in Miami that did business with contra leader Adolfo Calero, congressional sources say.

Officials connected with the investigation would neither name the American banks involved in the inquiry nor disclose the amount of money in the accounts.

One congressional source said Tuesday the committee's investigators were in Miami to deliver subpoenas for accounts in "10 to 11 banks" traced by poring over records provided to the committee by Calero.

"There are American banks involved, and they are obviously relevant [to the investigation]," said one Senate source. "They were involved in transactions with offshore banks."

Congressional investigators also are headed for Europe and Costa Rica in an effort to determine what happened to millions of dollars in profits from arms sales to Iran.

They have been hampered by their inability to examine the secret Swiss bank accounts used in the alleged White House scheme to divert profits from the arms

sales to the U.S.-backed contras fighting the Nicaraguan government.

Lawyers for the Senate expect to appeal to the U.S. District Court here to force retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, believed by investigators to be a key figure in the alleged scheme, to open secret Swiss bank accounts under his control.

But the investigators can gain access to accounts in American banks and try to determine the purpose of the transactions.

Congressional sources said the investigators have been able to trace money going from foreign accounts in Switzerland to contra accounts in the Cayman Islands. Money from those contra accounts then was transferred to accounts in Miami banks.

Sources familiar with Calero's records said the contra leader used funds from accounts in the Cayman Islands to buy supplies from companies with bank accounts in Miami.

One source who has seen the records said they identify some of the suppliers by name but others are identified only by the bank name and account numbers. The congressional investigators could obtain the names of the account holders from the banks involved.

Sources close to Calero said they thought the payments under scrutiny by investigators were made to firms that set up bank accounts in Miami for "nonlethal" supplies used by the contras.

"None whatsoever" of the money was used for weapons, said a source close to Calero.

Calero has acknowledged that the contras received \$200,000 in October, 1985, from a Swiss bank account belonging to Lake Resources, a company controlled by former White House aide Lt. Col. Oliver North and Secord.

That transaction occurred about four months before North and Secord allegedly began diverting profits from the Iranian arms sales to the contras. A memo prepared by a Washington public relations firm with ties to North indicates that conservative fundraiser Carl [Spitz] Channell had funneled more than \$200,000 to the Lake Resources account shortly before the October, 1985, transaction.

Calero has said the most active of six contra accounts was one at BAC International Bank, a Cayman Islands bank believed to be controlled by Nicaraguan exiles.

The New York Times, quoting two unidentified senators and a House member, reported in its Wednesday editions that congressional investigators have clear indications that William Casey, the former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, masterminded the Reagan administration's efforts to help the Nicaraguan rebels get military supplies.

The lawmakers, members of the special committees investigating the Iran-contra affair, did not say what specific evidence they had, the Times said. But other legislators and congressional staff assistants said actions taken by Casey, who remains critically ill after surgery for a cancerous brain tumor, had become a central focus of the committees' investigation, the newspaper said.

Those sources said they did not know whether Casey was involved in channeling money from the secret weapons sales to Iran to the contras.

In testimony last year before he was hospitalized, Casey denied any role in supplying the Nicaraguan insurgents. Robert Gates, the acting director of the CIA, who was Casey's deputy, said in congressional testimony last month that neither Casey nor the agency as a whole took part in activities prohibited by Congress.

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Lawmakers and staff assistants, who spoke on condition that they not be identified, said they believed Casey had encouraged North, then on President Reagan's National Security Council staff, to organize the supply operation, the Times said. Casey, they said, had probably told North that the President wanted him to do it.

They said Casey had turned to North to coordinate the operation to mask the CIA's involvement and to avoid having to report the matter to Congress.

That would explain how North, a relatively low-ranking Marine officer who was unlikely to have acted without orders, could have been in the position of directing such a major foreign policy operation, a Republican lawmaker said.